

Amendment to the Specification

Please insert the following paragraph at the beginning of the application:

CROSS REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATION

This application claims the benefit of U.S. Provisional Patent Application Ser. No. 60/516,191, to Harpal Mann, entitled, “VIRTUAL CHASSIS FOR CONTINUOUS SWITCHING,” filed October 31, 2003.

Please replace the third full paragraph of page 3 with the following paragraph:

As is described in greater detail below, a plurality of the switching devices 102-104 possess a centralized management module (CMM) 112-114. The primary purpose of the CMM is to manage the system of switches 100, integrate switch resources throughout the system of switches 100, and synchronize the various resources across the system of switches 100. Once the resources in the system of switches 100 have been integrated and synchronized across each of the switching devices, the network administrator may view and manage the entire system of switches ~~my merely~~ by merely interfacing with a single switching device.

Please replace the third full paragraph of page 4 with the following paragraph:

The integrated switch management system of the preferred embodiment employs an identification scheme to uniquely identify each stack switch and define the default order with which primary management responsibilities are assigned. Although each of the stack switches is associated with the same IP address, each stack switch is assigned a unique identifier for purposes of management. In particular, each stack switch, also referred to as an element, is referenced by a switch element identifier. In the preferred embodiment, element identifiers are

assigned via an element assignment mechanism configured to assign a default element number of “1” to the primary stack switch and a default element number of “2” to the secondary stack switch. If and when necessary, subsequent stack switches may be assigned the role of a primary or secondary CMM in consecutively higher numerical order. The element assignment mechanism, preferably a hardware mechanism, should remain static from one reboot to another, avoid disturbing an element assignment scheme for remaining element when a new element is added to or an existing element ~~elements~~ removed from the system of switches 100.

Please replace the second full paragraph of page 6 with the following paragraph:

During the discovery phase, the stack manager learns information: MAC ~~(MAC~~ address, assigned slot number, number and type of ports about the different elements in the stack 100. The stack manager either determines that it knows the entire topology or a discovery timer expires and the proceeds to the second phase. In the second phase, management role is assigned to each element. There are three roles possible: primary CMM, secondary CMM and idle. The decision criteria used to make the assignment are preferably based on the element number. The element with the lowest slot number will be chosen to act as the primary CMM and the element with the next lowest slot number will be chosen to act as the secondary CMM.

Please replace the second full paragraph of page 10 with the following paragraph:

If a match is detected in the address table 536, the classifier 532 maps the flow into the appropriate flow category for purposes of applying QoS. In the preferred embodiment, the QoS policies are embodied in the Cross-Element QoS (CEQ) rules 538 that govern how a PDU propagates through the system of switches 100 as a function of the ingress element/ingress port, egress element/remote egress port, and priority. The CEQ rules 538 for a system of switches including four stackable switches, each stackable switching including eight Ethernet ports, are schematically represented in the 3-dimensional ~~matrix~~ QoS matrix 700 of FIG. 7. The ingress switching element/port are represented on the ordinate axis, wherein port numbers 1-8 are

associated with A ~~with a~~ first switching element, port numbers 9-16 are associated with a second switching element, port numbers 17-24 are associated with a third switching element, and port numbers 25-32 are associated with a fourth switching element. The egress switching port numbers ranging from 1-32 are analogous to the ingress port numbers and represented on the vertical axis. For each ingress port and egress port pair, the QoS matrix 700 in the preferred embodiment is further divided into eight possible priority values represented ~~represent~~ along the third dimension. The priority value generally corresponds to the inbound PDU priority such as the 802.1p priority. The appropriate QoS rule is retrieved from the OoS matrix 700 at the location identified by the associated combination of ingress port/remote egress port pair and priority.

Please replace the second full paragraph of page 12 with the following paragraph:

The queue scheduler 544 then coordinates the output of PDUs from the plurality of queues Q1-Q8 of each of the queue memories 542-543. In the preferred embodiment, the scheduler 544 performs time division multiplexing of the element output, each queue being afforded a quantity of bandwidth correlated with the priority level of the queue and number of queues at that priority. Any one of various queue-weighting schemes may be employed to efficiently utilize ~~utilizes~~ the bandwidth while simultaneously optimizing the fairness with which the queues are allocated fractional portions of the bandwidth. Weighted Fair Queueing (WFQ) and round robin are two of the most notable queuing schemes with which the invention may be implemented.

Please replace the first paragraph of page 14 with the following paragraph:

We claim: